AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1.   (currently amended)   A method for image processing, the method comprising:

applying a point-based threshold function to identifying candidate edge chains in an image being processed;

determining a dynamic chain-based threshold function that is dependent on at least one characteristic of the image being processed;

applying the dynamic chain-based threshold function to the candidate edge chains; and

removing from a set of edge chains those candidate edge chains that fail to pass the dynamic chain-based threshold function.

2.   (original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one characteristic of the image comprises a global characteristic of the image.

3.   (canceled)

4.   (original)   The method of claim 2, wherein the global characteristic comprises a global measure of color variation that is calculated over an image.

5.   (original)   The method of claim 4, wherein the global measure comprises a mean measure of the color variation.

6.   (original)   The method of claim 4, wherein the global measure comprises a median measure of the color variation.

7.   (original)   The method of claim 4, wherein the global measure is calculated over the candidate edge chains within the image.

8.   (original)   The method of claim 2, wherein the dynamic chain-based threshold function comprises a linear function of the global characteristic.

9.   (original)   An apparatus for image processing, the apparatus comprising:

a candidate edge chain identifier for identifying candidate edge chains in an image being processed;

means for determining a dynamic chain-based threshold function that is dependent on at least one characteristic of the image being processed; and

a threshold applicator for applying the dynamic chain-based threshold function to the candidate edge chains.

10. (original) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the at least one characteristic of the image comprises a global characteristic of the image.

11. (original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the global characteristic comprises a global measure of color variation that is calculated over an image.

12. (original) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the global measure comprises a mean measure of the color variation.

13. (original) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the global measure comprises a median measure of the color variation.

14. (original) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the global measure is calculated over the candidate edge chains within the image.

15. (original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the dynamic chain-based threshold function comprises a linear function of the global characteristic.

16. (original) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the apparatus comprises a video encoder.

17. (original) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the video encoder is configured to operate cooperatively with a video decoder, and wherein the video decoder also comprises the edge identifier, the means for determining, and the thresholder.

18. (original) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the apparatus comprises a video decoder.

19. (original) A method for processing an image, the method comprises:

determining a dynamic chain-based threshold function that is dependent on at least one global characteristic of the image being processed; and

applying the dynamic chain-based threshold function to a candidate edge chain.

20.   (original)   A system for image processing, the system comprising:

an encoder that includes a candidate edge chain identifier for identifying candidate edge chains in an image being processed, means for calculating a dynamic chain-based threshold function that is dependent on at least one characteristic of the image being processed, and a threshold applicator for applying the dynamic chain-based threshold function to the candidate edge chains; and

a decoder configured to operate in cooperation with the encoder, wherein the decoder also includes the candidate edge chain, the means for, and the threshold applicator.